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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 YEREVAN 000304

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CARC AND PRM/ECA (MJOHNSON)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PRFE](#) [IZ](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY YEREVAN PROPOSAL FOR FY 2009 JULIA TAFT FUND FOR

REFUGEES

REF: A) STATE 14280, B) 2008 Yerevan 000317

SUMMARY

¶1. SUMMARY: Embassy Yerevan, Armenia, requests USD 20,000 in Taft Refugee Funds for the one-time support of YMCA Shelter NGO to provide ethnic Armenian refugees from Iraq with furniture in a newly renovated state refugee shelter located in Darbnik village of Ararat region. YMCA Shelter NGO is a longstanding implementing partner of UNHCR-Armenia for ongoing support to refugees. The Taft fund grant will complement furniture purchased by UNHCR for the Darbnik shelter (adding to what UNHCR has already purchased), thus helping to secure basic living conditions for 46 Iraqi families that will move into the shelter shortly. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

¶2. As of February 2009 the State Migration Agency (SMA) in Armenia has registered about 1,000 refugees from Iraq. The overwhelming majority of these Iraqi refugees are of Armenian origin, and fled the generalized violence in Iraq associated with ethnic and religious persecution. According to UNHCR the flow of Iraqi refugees, which started back in 2003, has now almost stopped. However, these 1,000 refugees (about 150 families) have indicated that they want to resettle permanently in Armenia. While both the Armenian government and population are receptive towards Armenian refugees in general and especially to Armenians from Iraq, the refugees face integration challenges in Armenia.

¶3. In 2008 UNHCR and SMA conducted a profiling exercise with regard to Iraqi refugees in Armenia to identify the most urgent socio-economic needs of this group. According to the preliminary results, the most critical issues are shelter and a lack of job opportunities. Almost all Iraqi refugees are currently living in rented apartments, paying substantial amounts from their already scarce family resources, making it difficult for them to meet their basic needs in food, health and education. The situation is further aggravated by the ongoing financial crisis, which continues to impact negatively the socio-economic situation of the country as a whole. The impact of this crisis (which will likely get worse in coming months) on vulnerable groups such as refugees is expected to be devastating.

JUSTIFICATION

¶4. In March 2009 UNHCR, through the YMCA Shelter NGO, remodeled and renovated the former Agricultural College building in Darbnik village, creating 46 (new but empty) 1 - 3 bedroom apartments to be provided to the most vulnerable Iraqi refugee families (ref B). The

funding requested herein will help to secure basic living conditions for these families by furnishing the apartments with basic furniture sets. These are expensive given the refugees' modest resources, and beyond what the families can afford. Hence, the provision of furniture in the apartments will serve as a durable solution for vulnerable Iraqi refugees who did not bring furniture or belongings with them, and were compelled to move from one place to another in search of cheaper furnished apartments. The procured furniture will remain the property of the "Dormitories" CJSC (Closed Joint-Stock Company) of the Ministry of Territorial Administration (in charge of maintenance and management of this shelter), and will continue to serve new refugee families that will move into the building once the status of the initially settled families improves and they relocate.

 DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

15. YMCA Shelter NGO, which is a trusted and reliable implementing partner of UNHCR, will organize the procurement. With the requested funding, the NGO will procure basic furniture sets (beds, kitchen cupboards and chairs) for 31 apartments in the Darbnik shelter, with UNHCR having already procured furniture for the remaining 15 apartments. The requested USD 20,000 will fully cover the basic furniture needs for the shelter. Funds will be transferred to the bank account of YMCA Shelter, which will conduct all preparatory work and implement the procurement in line with UNHCR procurement guidelines. The NGO will disburse funds to the identified vendor based on separate procurement contracts. The transportation and assembly of the furniture is included in the quotation below. A guarantee period will be defined to ensure proper quality of the furniture. UNHCR will provide full guidance and support to YMCA

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Shelter for the organization of the procurement.

 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

ITEM	QUANTITY	TOTAL COST	UNIT COST
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Kitchen Cupboard	46	USD 6,900	USD 150
Bed	66	USD 9,900	USD 150
Chair	80	USD 3,200	USD 40
GRAND TOTAL		USD 20,000	
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 IDENTIFICATION OF IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

17. YMCA Shelter NGO was established in 1994, and has become UNHCR's main implementing partner for the construction of shelters for refugee families. Since 1994 YMCA Shelter, through UNHCR funding and other co-funding donors, has provided more than 4,500 refugee families with permanent and social housing. The NGO has gained considerable knowledge and experience in managing shelter projects funded by both local and international donor organizations, and foreign governments.

18. Conoff, in his capacity as Grants Officer Representative (GOR) for the FY08 Taft Refugee Fund grant, and POL/ECON Assistant visited the shelter in Darbnik village on April 16, 2009 along with UNHCR and representatives of the NGO YMCA Shelter. The shelter is scheduled to open in mid-May. Conoff verified the need for this additional furniture, reviewed the quotes with NGO YMCA Shelter, and confirmed that the furniture is available for immediate purchase and delivery. We are sending photos of the Darbnik village shelter separately to PRM/ECA (M. Johnson) by e-mail.

POST CERTIFICATION

19. Post has reviewed the code of conduct signed by the Executive Director of YMCA Shelter NGO, Gagik Muradyan, as the implementing partner of UNHCR. Mr. Muradyan will be the point of contact for this grant. Post certifies that it has the authority and capacity at post to award a grant to YMCA Shelter NGO prior to the end of the fiscal year. Our Public Affairs and Grant Officer, Thomas Mittnacht, will sign the grant.

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